

CODE OF ETHICS

CODE AND CANON OF POLICE ETHICS

Policy

Dedication to the law, discretion in enforcing the law, and a high degree of public trust puts employees of the Department in a position of extreme importance in our society. The following Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and Canons of Police Ethics are adopted as a general standard of conduct for all employees of the Bellevue Police Department. All employees will receive ethics training at a minimum, biennially.

Code of Ethics

(CALEA 26.1.1)

As a police employee, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violation or disorder, and to respect the Constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in the thought and deed in both my personal and official life. I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my Department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or whatever is confided in me in my official capacity will be kept confidential unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize police authority as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession--law enforcement.

Canons of Police Ethics

1. Primary Responsibility of Job

The primary responsibility of the police service is the protection of the people of the United States through the upholding of their laws; chief among these is the Constitution of the United States and its amendments. The law enforcement employee always represents the whole of the community and its legally expressed will and is never the arm of any political party or clique.

2. Limitations of Authority

The first duty of a law enforcement employee, as upholder of the law, is to know its bounds upon him/her in enforcing it. Because he/she represents the legal will of the community, be it local, state or federal, he/she must be aware of the limitations and prescriptions which the people, through law, have placed upon him/her. He/she must recognize the genius of the American system of government which gives to no man, groups of people, or institution, absolute power, and he/she must insure that he/she, as a prime defender of the system, does not pervert its character.

3. Duty to be familiar with the Law and with Responsibilities of Self and other Public Officials

The law enforcement employee will assiduously apply himself/herself to the study of the principles of the laws which he/she is sworn to uphold. He/she will make certain of his/her responsibilities in the particulars of their enforcement, seeking aid from his/her superiors in matters of technicality or principle when these are not clear to him/her; he/she will make special effort to fully understand his/her relationship to other public officials, including other law enforcement agencies, particularly on matters of jurisdiction, both geographically and substantively.

4. Utilization of Proper Means to Gain Proper Ends

The law enforcement employee will be mindful of their responsibility to pay strict heed to the selection of means in discharging the duties of their office. Violations of law or disregard for public safety and property on the part of an employee are intrinsically wrong; they are self-defeating in that they instill in the public mind a like disposition. The employment of illegal means, no matter how worthy the end, is certain to encourage disrespect for the law. If the law is to be honored, it must first be honored by those who enforce it.

5. Cooperation with Public Officials in the Discharge of Their Authorized Duties

The law enforcement employee will cooperate fully with other public officials in the discharge of authorized duties, regardless of party affiliation or personal prejudice. They will be meticulous, however, in assuring themselves of the propriety, under the law, of such actions and will guard against the use of their office or person whether knowingly or unknowingly, in any improper or illegal action. In any situation open to questions, they will seek authority from their superior, giving them a fuller report of the proposed service or action.

6. Private Conduct

The law enforcement employee will be mindful of their special identification by the public as an upholder of the law. Laxity of conduct or manner in private life, expressing either disrespect for the law or seeking to gain special privilege, cannot but reflect upon the police employee and the police service. The community and the service require that the law enforcement employee lead the life of a decent and honorable person. Following the career of a police employee gives no person special prerequisites. It does give the satisfaction of pride of following and furthering an unbroken tradition of safeguarding the American republic. The employee who reflects upon this tradition will not degrade it.

7. Conduct toward the Public

The law enforcement employee, mindful of their responsibility to the whole community, will deal with individuals of the community in a manner calculated to instill respect for its laws and its police service. The law enforcement employee will conduct his/her official life in a manner such as will inspire confidence and trust. Thus, they will be neither overbearing or subservient, as no individual citizen has an obligation to stand in awe of them nor a right to command them. The employee will give service where he/she can, and require compliance with the law. He/she will do neither from personal preference or prejudice but rather as a duly appointed police employee discharging their obligation.

8. Conduct in Arresting and Dealing with Law Violators

The law enforcement employee will use their powers of arrest strictly in accordance with the law and with due regard to the rights of the citizen concerned. Their office gives them no right to persecute the violator nor to mete out punishment for an offense. They will, at all times, have a clear appreciation of their responsibilities and limitations regarding detention of the violator; they will conduct themselves in such a manner as will minimize the possibility of having to use force. To this end he/she will cultivate a

dedication to the service of the people and the equitable upholding of their laws, whether in the handling of law violators or in dealing with the law-abiding.

9. Gifts and Favors

The law enforcement employee, representing government, bears the heavy responsibility of maintaining, in their own conduct, the honor and integrity of all government institutions. He/she will, therefore, guard against placing themselves in a position in which any person can expect special consideration or in which the public can reasonably assume that special consideration is being given. Thus, they should be firm in refusing gifts, favors, or gratuities, large or small, which can in the public mind, be interpreted as capable of influencing their judgment in the discharge of their duties.

10. Presentation of Evidence

The law enforcement employee will be concerned equally in the prosecution of the wrongdoer and the defense of the innocent. They will ascertain what constitutes evidence and will present such evidence impartially and without malice. In so doing, they will ignore social, political, and all other distinctions among the persons involved, strengthening the tradition of the reliability and integrity of their word.

The law enforcement employee will take special pains to increase their perception and skill of observation, mindful that in many situations they are the sole impartial testimony to the facts of the case.

11. Attitude toward Profession

The law enforcement employee will regard the discharge of their duties as a public trust and recognize his/her responsibility as a public servant. By diligent study and sincere attention to self-improvement, they will strive to make the best possible application of science to the solution of crime, and in the field of human relationships, they will strive for effective leadership and public influence in matters affecting public safety. They will appreciate the importance and responsibility of their office and hold police work to be an honorable profession rendering valuable service to their community and their country.

12. Integrity and Truthfulness

Members of the Bellevue Police Department strive to serve the community with veracity, reliability, and the utmost honor.

Employees shall be forthright and truthful at all times on all matters which pertain to their duties, conduct, observations, or any other area pertaining to the official business of the Bellevue Police Department.

No portion of this section shall be interpreted to imply that employees are prohibited from the use of deception to accomplish an official investigative purpose.